

Kidney MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2024

VOLUME NO. 2.1 | Summer 2024

SUMMER GRILLING GUIDE

Tips for kidney-friendly barbecuing

BEAT THE HEAT

How high temperatures affect the kidneys and what to do

TRAVELING WITH KIDNEY DISEASE

Keeping your summer vacation safe

KICKSTARTING YOUR EXERCISE ROUTINE

Exercise snacks to get you started

MEET A TRANSPLANT RECIPIENT

Insights from Chief Michael Recalma



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Kidney MAGAZINE

THE SUMMER ISSUE

Summer 2024 | Issue 2.1

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BC & Yukon Branch

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letter from the editor

Dear reader,

Welcome to our second issue of *Kidney Magazine*. We were thrilled with the feedback on our inaugural issue, and look forward to our readership growing and sharing their interests in kidney health style. As we emerge from our winter hibernation, summer brings renewed activities, longer days, and also often busy schedules. So, in this issue, we are focusing on helpful tips, quick ideas, and easy lists to answer questions and help you skim a number of interesting topics for those busy days. Have more time to delve into a deeper read? Check out our article on genetics and the future of CKD treatment. Research is the foundation upon which modern medicine continues to evolve. It drives innovation and improves patient care. The Kidney Foundation of Canada funds a number of research studies, some of which we will feature in our next issue.

From articles on enjoying a barbecue on a sunny day, to kickstarting your exercise routine and how important the mind and body connection is, you will discover ways to help maintain or improve your kidney health.

We hope you find the summer issue not only informative but also inspiring. Thank you for being a part of the *Kidney Magazine* community. Happy reading!

Andrea Rudy
Managing Editor

Hibiscus Ice Tea Punch

Ingredients

5 hibiscus tea bags*
4 cups boiling water
1-2 tbsp honey (depending on preference)
4 cups sparkling water
8-10 hulled and halved strawberries
4 sprigs mint
Ice (optional)

Steep the tea bags in boiling water for 10-15 minutes.
Add honey and stir.
Refrigerate until chilled (about 1 hour).
Pour in a glass with equal parts sparkling water.
Add strawberries, mint, and ice if desired.



* check with your health care provider if you are on medications as some may interfere with herbal teas.

A close-up photograph of a glass filled with a vibrant red beverage, likely hibiscus ice tea punch. The glass is covered in condensation and contains several large ice cubes and fresh strawberries. The background is softly blurred, showing more strawberries and green foliage.

South Pacific flavours meet BC

After emigrating from Fiji to British Columbia at age 20, Saras Reddy has always ensured the flavours of home stayed with her. In Fiji, hibiscus leaves and flowers are used in various traditional dishes and beverages. Her twist on Hibiscus Ice Tea Punch uses BC strawberries for a refreshing fusion.

Today, as a care partner for her husband, Dan, she ensures all meals are renal-friendly while full of flavour. Try her family favourite summery drink for a kidney diet.



grilling with kidney health in mind

A GUIDE TO SUMMER BBQ

by Dani Renouf, RD, MSc

Summer is synonymous with outdoor gatherings, warm weather, and the irresistible aroma of barbecues wafting over from the neighbour's backyard. While grilling is a popular summer pastime—and some of us even brave the winter chill to get that flame grill flavour—it's essential to consider the impact of food choices on kidney health. With a little mindfulness, we can enjoy a delicious barbecue while supporting our kidneys. This guide will provide you with tips and recipes to make your summer BBQ kidney-friendly.

adhering to a renal-friendly diet

A dietary pattern that is varied and includes more fresh fruits, vegetables, beans, lentils, and whole grains is not only beneficial for kidney health, but also ties in well to other dietary needs for heart and diabetes health. Eating a variety of foods, enjoying different ways of preparing foods, and cooking more often at home are great ways to incorporate new flavours into your meals all year round!

**kidney-friendly tips
and techniques**

01

Choose Lean Proteins

Grilling typically revolves around protein-rich foods like burgers, steaks, and sausages. However, for those mindful of kidney health, it's crucial to choose lean protein options or a plant-based protein like tofu or homemade bean burger instead. Opt for skinless poultry, fish, or lean cuts of meat, as these are lower in saturated fats.



02

Replace Salt with Spices

One of the primary concerns for kidney health is managing sodium intake. Traditional barbecue sauces and rubs can be high in salt, which may contribute to elevated blood pressure and strain on the kidneys. Instead, experiment with homemade rubs using herbs, citrus, and pepper for added flavor without the sodium overload. Fresh, natural ingredients can provide a burst of taste without compromising your kidney health.

03

Incorporate Kidney-Friendly Vegetables

Vegetables are a fantastic addition to any barbecue, providing essential nutrients and fiber. Choose from a wide variety of vegetables including bell peppers, zucchini, onions, and asparagus. Grill them in a vegetable tray separate from your protein to prevent cross-contamination.



04

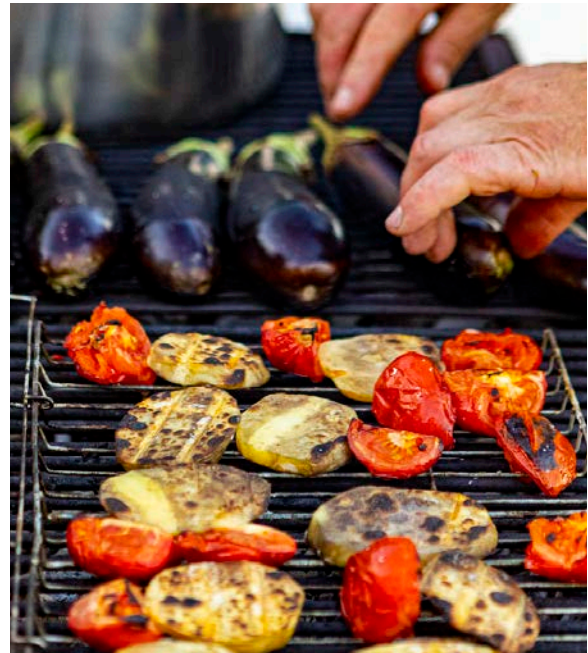
Hydration is Key

Staying hydrated is crucial for kidney health. As you enjoy your summer BBQ, be sure to drink plenty of water. Consider infusing your water with slices of cucumber, lemon, or mint for a refreshing twist.

05

Make Your Own Marinades

Be careful with barbecue sauces, which are typically high in sodium and sugar. Instead, try making a low-sodium, kidney-friendly sauce at home. Visit the Kidney Community Kitchen for some flavourful recipes like Pork Skewers and Lime Grilled Turkey at kidneycommunitykitchen.ca.



If you have specific dietary restrictions or concerns related to kidney health, it's advisable to consult with a healthcare professional or a registered dietitian. They can provide personalized guidance based on your individual health needs.

Try the Chicken Dijon Marinade recipe (opposite) for an easy, mid-week meal. Happy grilling!



Chicken Dijon Marinade

This easy marinade makes use of several items already on hand, and is great on barbecued chicken.

Ingredients

2 tbsp lemon juice
2 tbsp canola oil
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
1/2 tsp ground pepper

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Marinate your chicken breasts or thighs for 1-2 hours.
3. Grill on medium-high heat for about 20 minutes (turning once) or until no trace of pink remains.
4. Serve with a salad and rice and enjoy!

For more kidney-friendly recipes, visit the [kidneycommunitykitchen.ca](https://www.kidneycommunitykitchen.ca). You can also find information and tools to help you manage your renal diet.



beat the **heat**

how high temperatures affect kidney function

by Michelle Hampson

In recent years, our world has seen an increase in summer temperatures. While this can mean more fun outdoor adventures, too much exposure to heat takes a toll on people's health. Heat and dehydration can strain the kidneys, and so it's important that people with existing kidney health complications take extra precautions during the hot summer months.



Increased Blood Pressure

Heat can contribute to elevated blood pressure levels, putting additional strain on the kidneys. Individuals with hypertension or pre-existing kidney problems may be more susceptible to the negative effects of increased blood pressure.



Dehydration and kidney strain

High temperatures can lead to increased sweating, potentially causing dehydration. Dehydration reduces blood flow to the kidneys, making them work harder to maintain proper function. For individuals with kidney issues, this added stress can exacerbate existing problems.



Impact on medication effectiveness

Some medications commonly prescribed for kidney-related conditions, such as diuretics, can affect the body's ability to regulate temperature and fluid balance. Exposure to high temperatures may influence the effectiveness of these medications, meaning special care should be taken to maintain the right fluid levels.

tips for protecting your kidneys from the heat

1. Stay hydrated

Dehydration can be avoided by drinking plenty of water throughout the day, and avoiding excessive consumption of caffeinated or sugary beverages. However, some people living with kidney disease must follow fluid restrictions, which can make it more challenging to stay adequately hydrated in the summer months. (See below for more information on hydration).

2. Limit outdoor activities during peak heat

Plan activities for early morning or late evening when temperatures are cooler. Avoid strenuous activities during the peak of the day to reduce risk of dehydration and heat-related stress on kidneys.

3. Protect your skin

Sun protection is vital for everyone, which can be done by limiting overall sun exposure, using sunscreen with a high SPF, and wearing clothing that provides additional sun protection, such as wide-brimmed hats. Avoiding excessive sun exposure is especially important for transplant recipients taking certain medications that make them more susceptible to skin complications.

4. Seek shade and stay cool

Use cooling methods such as fans, air conditioning, or cold compresses to regulate body temperature. Folks who do not have air conditioners at home could go to cooler, public places like malls during peak heat hours. Frozen snacks are also a tasty option to help cool off, and sucking on ice chips may be a good choice for people following fluid restrictions.

staying hydrated

One of the best ways to beat the heat and maintain optimal kidney health is to stay hydrated. When people become dehydrated, the kidneys must work harder to filter blood, putting additional strain on them. "Staying hydrated in really hot weather is super important for everyone, but that's magnified in people who have kidney disease," explains Mike Bevilacqua, a nephrologist based in Surrey, BC.

He points out that many people living with kidney disease are hit with a "double whammy" when it comes to hydration, because some of the most effective medications to support optimal kidney health – such as ACE inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers, and SGLT2 inhibitors – can make the kidneys more sensitive to dehydration. Nevertheless, Dr. Bevilacqua emphasizes that these medications are still very beneficial for kidney health and should be continued throughout the summer – it just means that people on these medications

should take extra care to ensure they stay hydrated.

For many people with mild to moderate kidney disease, staying adequately hydrated may be as simple as drinking plenty of water, avoiding peak heat hours, and using fans and cold compresses. However, staying hydrated may be more challenging for people who have fluid restrictions, which includes those affected by kidney disease who are on dialysis or who have heart failure.

As Dr. Bevilacqua points out, the heat can cause people to sweat more, and in some cases people on fluid restriction may need to increase their fluid intake to counterbalance this loss.

"So walking that balance is really important," he says. "As a general rule, if someone is in that situation, they should talk to their kidney team about whether they should be adjusting this fluid restriction based on the heat."

traveling with kidney disease

keep your summer vacation healthy

by Andrea Rudy (in consultation with BC Renal)

For many of us, travelling is an important part to our quality of life. It allows us to experience diverse cultures, traditions, and perspectives, while enjoying the beauty of nature, history, and places around the world. Those with kidney disease, however, face unique challenges and may hesitate to embark on a journey. But with thoughtful planning, both comfort and safety can be ensured throughout the trip. Here are some helpful tips to keep in mind when preparing to travel.

Consult Your Healthcare Team

Before planning a trip, schedule a consultation with your healthcare team. Inform them about your travel plans and seek advice on how to manage your kidney health during the journey. They can provide personalized recommendations, adjust medications and laboratory testing if necessary, and offer guidance on potential challenges you might face.

Plan Ahead for Medications and Supplies

Ensure you have an ample supply of necessary medications and medical supplies for the duration of your trip. Pack medications in their original containers, and carry a list of your prescriptions, dosages, and your healthcare provider's contact information. It's also wise to carry extra supplies in case of unexpected delays or loss.

Research Medical Facilities at Your Destination

Familiarize yourself with the medical facilities available at your destination. This can include general medical services, emergency medical services, and access to laboratory testing if your team has asked you to monitor that while away. Having this information on hand provides peace of mind and quick access to medical assistance if needed.



Adjust Your Diet Accordingly

Travel often involves changes in diet and eating habits. If you have dietary restrictions due to kidney disease, plan your meals carefully. Look for restaurants that offer kidney-friendly options and communicate your dietary needs to accommodation providers, especially if you have specific dietary requirements.

Protect Yourself from Infections

Kidney disease can compromise the immune system, making individuals more susceptible to infections. Practice good hygiene by washing hands frequently, carrying hand sanitizer, and avoiding contact with sick individuals. Consider getting vaccinated against preventable diseases before traveling.

Manage Stress

Traveling can be stressful, and stress can impact kidney function. Plan your itinerary with relaxation in mind, allow for downtime, and prioritize self-care. Incorporate stress-reducing activities such as meditation or gentle exercise into your travel routine.

Stay Informed About Time Zones

If traveling across time zones, work with your healthcare team to adjust your medication

schedule accordingly. Maintaining consistency in your medication routine helps support stable kidney function, even as you adjust to changes in time zones.

Stay Hydrated

Dehydration can exacerbate kidney issues, and travel-related factors such as long flights or exposure to different climates can contribute to fluid loss. Stay well-hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout your journey. Avoid excessive consumption of caffeinated or alcoholic beverages, as they can contribute to dehydration.

Invest in Travel Insurance

Consider purchasing travel insurance that covers medical emergencies, including those related to your kidney condition. Verify the specifics of the coverage, ensuring it addresses your unique health needs during the trip. Make sure to fully disclose all pre-existing conditions. Sometimes people are hesitant to do so because the cost goes up, but if you don't, it is very likely the insurance will be void if something happens.

Listen to Your Body

Pay close attention to how your body responds to travel-related stressors and changes. If you experience any unusual symptoms or





discomfort, seek medical attention promptly. Being proactive and attentive to your body's signals can help prevent complications.

Dialysis Patients: Plan Well in Advance

Hemodialysis Patients

If you are on hemodialysis, contact your preferred dialysis unit at your desired destination at least three months before you wish to travel (the further ahead the better). Do not book your travel until the visiting dialysis unit tells you it is ok. It is important they have space and can meet your medical needs. BC Renal has a helpful handout, [Hemodialysis and Traveling – Patients Living in British Columbia Who Want to Travel \(In or Outside BC\)](#), which serves as a step-by-step guide and includes contact information for dialysis units within and outside BC.

Peritoneal Dialysis Patients

If you are on peritoneal dialysis (PD), contact your PD program and the supplies vendor in advance of your trip: four weeks within Canada, six weeks within the US, and 3-4 months

for international destinations. Confirm that your destination can receive your supplies prior to arrival. You will be required to pack your PD cyclor in a hard case and bring it to the destination along with a couple of days' supplies to carry you over. Have your nephrologist sign a [BC Renal Travel Letter](#) and carry it with you. If you are travelling by plane, make sure you read and use the BC Renal [Before You Fly](#) document. All the BC Renal documents are available at bcrenal.ca.

Traveling with kidney disease requires careful planning and consideration, but it should not deter you from exploring the world. By consulting with your healthcare team, planning ahead for medications and supplies, and taking proactive steps to protect your health, you can embark on a safe and enjoyable journey. With the right precautions and a bit of extra preparation, individuals with kidney disease can travel confidently, making the most of their adventures while prioritizing their well-being.

the impact **volunteering** makes

by Christina Bennett, Volunteer Programs Manager

Volunteerism starts with the valuable donation of time, and it ripples out through the organization and into the community as a force for positive change. But for a volunteer, the impact can be more than just knowing your help is making a difference to a cause.

Volunteering is also good for the volunteer and our communities at large. It builds a deep-rooted sense of belonging, understanding and empathy, all of which helps our mental wellbeing. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association, studies consistently show that regular volunteer activity can have a positive impact on our physical as well as our mental health.

At the Kidney Foundation, volunteers are united behind a common cause of relieving the burden from those impacted by kidney disease and finding a cure. We are fortunate in BC and the Yukon to have an active and generous volunteer communities. They offer their time and expertise in so many areas from fundraising, patient supports, peer mentoring, community education, and advocacy.

A big supporter of volunteerism and a long-time volunteer with The Kidney Foundation, Terry Chan, Treasurer of the Chinese Renal Association of BC & Yukon and former BCY Branch board member, sees “volunteering [as] an important asset in all kinds of health concerns.” He points out that:

For people dealing with kidney disease, volunteering itself “can contribute a lot including mental health support.... social supports and even build relationships within communities.”

Together we can achieve more. If you would like to learn more about volunteering with the BC & Yukon Branch, please contact us at volunteer.bcy@kidney.ca.



genetics and the future of CKD treatment

Contributors: Andrea Rudy and Mark Elliott, MD, FRCPC

Genomics is one of the fastest growing fields in science, and new discoveries and technologies can be incredibly useful in helping to improve the treatment of chronic diseases and illnesses.

While many of us have a general understanding of genetics and its role in our traits, like eye colour or height, it is likely few of us know our own genome—complete genetic profile—and how important understanding it is for those of us living with CKD (chronic kidney disease). Knowing what causes CKD is vital in determining the best treatment. However, nearly 15% of people with CKD do not have a determined source for the disease, a diagnosis called CKDu—CKD of unknown cause.

Around one in four people with CKDu will have a genetic condition as the underlying cause that has yet to be diagnosed.

Recognizing that a clear diagnosis for patients with CKDu has a direct impact on their care, Dr. Mark Elliott of St. Paul's Hospital and UBC developed a study to identify new gene-disease associations for CKDu. Leading the Genetic Studies of Chronic Kidney Disease with Drs. Adeera Levin and Mei Lin Bissonnette, the team hopes that discoveries will help improve treatment.

Genomics is one of the fastest growing fields in science, and new discoveries and technologies can be incredibly useful in helping to improve the treatment of chronic

diseases and illnesses. Patients with genetic diagnoses will be able to access precision medicine-based approaches to their care with the goal of slowing down or even preventing disease progression. As the technology advances, it could also lead to potential cures for genetic kidney disorders.

The change in treatments towards precision medicine aims to reduce the impact of CKD, which is currently limited by a lack of cures and therapies.

Establishing a diagnosis for patients with CKDu will have a direct effect on their clinical care.

It will allow the use of targeted therapies and help avoid treatments that are known to be ineffective. CKDu patients would no longer have to face an odyssey of diagnostic testing and examinations. It could also have a positive impact on transplant donor selection and family planning. Discoveries may not only improve treatment for patients, they will also help family members of those living with CKDu to be tested for the linked genes and identify any undiagnosed genetic conditions.

Data collected from this study will be available for future research work that could have even more power to identify new treatments.



cooking for kids with CKD

Contributors: Meredith Cushing, MS, MSHSE, RD, Kiana Gibson, and Alicia Walch

Maintaining a renal-friendly diet can be difficult enough for an adult, but when it comes to children with CKD (chronic kidney disease), managing a kidney diet that is also child friendly can seem like a monumental task. Registered dietitians at BC Children's Hospital work with families to help them make nutrition-related changes to manage their child's CKD, while ensuring overall proper nutrition critical for growing children and teens. It takes a lot of time, knowledge, and skills to plan meals, grocery shop, cook and store food, which can be difficult for busy families. In addition to time constraints, food preferences and peer influence cause many families to struggle with implementing nutrition recommendations.

Meredith Cushing, a registered dietitian specializing in pediatric CKD at BC Children's Hospital, noticed that families at the clinic were missing these essential food skills to follow a kidney-friendly eating pattern. Looking for a solution, she partnered with two Masters of Nutrition and Dietetic students at the University of British Columbia to run a study on CKD cooking skills for families.

Seventeen families were recruited and

participated in three virtual cooking classes via Zoom, either live or by watching the recording afterwards. Each cooking class taught them how to make a fun, delicious, and CKD-friendly meal from scratch, like homemade pizza dough with a roasted red pepper sauce, salad dressing, and cinnamon rolls. The research team found that families gained valuable food skills. Participants reported that the virtual cooking classes improved their knowledge around food selection and preparation, as well as food safety and storage.

Diana and her teenage son Max, who has CKD, participated in the study and shared their experience with us.

As a caregiver, what is your biggest challenge when it comes to food preparation for your child with CKD?

Like any parent, I want to make sure my child gets the proper nutrition he needs. Grabbing a piece of fruit or some veggies sounds easy, but this is rarely Max's favourite choice. It's very time consuming to meal plan, grocery



shop, and cook. A challenge for me is having sauces, dough, or meats pre-prepared in the freezer so that I don't resort to making a less healthy choice. Label reading is also hard; it can be quite daunting to read through ingredient lists and look out for all the added sodium, potassium, and phosphates.

For Max, what was his biggest challenge when it comes to eating with CKD?

Max is 14, so he gets frustrated that he can't regularly eat the foods most of his friends can. This often happens after school, if they stop at the 7/11 to grab chips or pizza or pop.

How have registered dietitians helped you manage Max's CKD?

Meredith taught us how to read food labels. We now know how to look at the ingredient list for added phosphates, and how to choose products where there are fewer milligrams of sodium than calories. For example, if one serving of pasta sauce is 50 calories, we're aiming for less than 50mg of sodium. The registered dietitian can also look at Max's blood levels and suggest where dietary changes can be made if sodium, potassium, or phosphorus levels are too high.

What is something that most people don't know about raising a child with CKD?

The hardest part is the unknown. We do our best to keep Max as healthy as possible, but it's stressful. Should he eat this? Does he have a cold or is it something else?

CKD will always be there, so we try not to burden him with that and let him be the kid he should be.

We try to keep Max focused on the positive things in his life like sports, family, friends and school, taking it one day at a time.

What has been your child's greatest success in managing their diet with CKD?

As a young teenager, Max is gaining confidence in reading food labels, but managing the serving size will always be a challenge.

What was something you learned over the course of this study?

I learned that there is too much stuff added to food! Sodium is everywhere! We all love convenience foods, but when dealing with CKD we really have to weigh in on the risks of convenience. Additives make things last longer and taste better but they don't conveniently make your body feel better. Instead, they make your kidneys work harder.

Taking the time to really understand what we are putting into our bodies is very important.

What was your favourite part about participating? Your least favourite part?

I really enjoyed the cook along classes. It was fun to try something new, like making our own dough, without anyone being able to see our messy kitchen – ha! The hardest part was trying to listen to Meredith while cooking.



Sometimes, she was showing a label to the screen, but I was busy measuring or chopping ingredients. But, I had the option of watching the recording after which was helpful.

Are there any recipes, techniques, or tips you learned during the study that you still use?

I learned how to make a roasted red pepper pizza sauce. This was a hit with my family and Max really enjoyed it. I also learned a bit more about how hard cheeses, like Parmesan, have a stronger flavour, so you can use less of them to reduce the sodium. Cheese is something that Max loves so this tip was really helpful.

What was it like including your child in the cooking sessions?

Max loved chopping veggies and making the tortillas. It's important for him to learn to cook and this gave him the opportunity. He liked tacos, but his favourites were the cinnamon buns made with leftover pizza dough!

Do you think these cooking videos and virtual classes could be a useful resource for other caregivers with children with CKD? Are there other nutrition resources you wish existed?

I definitely think these videos and virtual classes are a useful resource, especially for parents.

If someone's child is newly diagnosed with CKD, it gives them the opportunity to access recipes and healthy cooking tips from a registered dietitian. This is essential because many of the foods that children and teens gravitate towards are not always the best kidney-friendly choices.

It would be nice to see a resource on homemade snacks for teens and perhaps a video going through popular snack food labels. Also, maybe a resource for healthier menu items at popular chain restaurants. I know it's best to cook at home, but it's always helpful to be prepared with smarter choices.

Do you have any other thoughts about the study that you'd like to share?

This study was a nice reminder that we're not alone.

It's comforting to know that there are others on the Zoom session listening or cooking with their kids, facing the same issues and food struggles. We are all sharing this journey and doing our best to keep our kids healthy.

Recordings of all three cooking classes are available online at bcrenal.ca.

The Kidney Wellness Hub's "Come Cook with Us" series offers live, online cooking classes for kidney health. For information, visit kidneywellnesshub.ca.

Quick Tips

Be Mindful of Hidden Phosphorus

Read food labels and choose whole, fresh foods whenever possible.

Protein Moderation

Adjust protein intake based on the child's specific needs. Include high-quality protein sources like lean meats, poultry, and eggs. Consult with a dietitian to determine the appropriate amount.

Choose Low-Phosphorus Ingredients

Limit high-phosphorus foods that mainly come from additives in processed foods. Choose fresh ingredients more often.

Marinated Chicken Tacos

1½ lbs boneless skinless chicken thighs cut into cubes (can also use beef, fish or pork)
¼ cup fresh lime juice
¼ cup olive or canola oil
3 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
2 tsp ground cumin
1 ½ tsp chili powder
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
fresh ground pepper

Add chicken to a gallon size resealable bag. In a small bowl whisk lime juice, olive oil, garlic, cumin, chili powder, cilantro and ¾ tsp pepper.

Pour mixture over chicken in the bag then seal the bag while releasing any trapped air. Rub marinade over chicken. Transfer to fridge and marinate at least one hour and up to six hours.

Preheat grill to med-high heat (425-450°F).

Remove chicken from marinade and grill until chicken has cooked through, turning once halfway through grilling, about 5-6 minutes per side (thickest center should register 165°F and thighs should be slightly charred).

Transfer to a plate, cover with foil and let rest for five minutes.

Dice grilled chicken into cubes and serve in your your favourite taco or wrap.

Tips for Busy Parents

Store leftovers in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Double recipe and freeze half before baking for an easy weeknight meal. Cook from frozen or thaw overnight in fridge. (Remember to cook to an internal temperature of 165°F.)

Make simple, homemade tortillas to reduce sodium and additives; make in bulk and freeze.

Spicy Black Beans

2 tbsp olive oil
1 yellow onion, chopped
pinch of cayenne pepper
3 cloves of garlic, minced
1 ½ tsp ground cumin
2 tsp chili powder
1 tsp ground coriander
1 15-oz can black beans, low sodium

Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat.

Sauté onions and garlic and season with pepper. Let cook, stirring occasionally, until starting to brown.

Add cumin, chili powder, and coriander. Cook, stirring to toast the spices for one minute.

Add can of black beans, including its liquids, and bring to a simmer for about five minutes.

Mash with a potato masher until creamy. (You don't want to make a puree, just break some up to thicken the beans.)

Tips for Busy Parents

If you have leftover canned beans, put them in a freezer-safe container or bag and freeze for up to six months.

Use other types of no-sodium-added beans (kidney, navy, and cannellini). Use canned beans or dried beans, which require soaking and cooking prior to use.

Double this recipe and keep in the freezer to have with the chicken as an easy weeknight meal.

This recipe can be eaten as a side dish, in a homemade taco or burrito, or over rice as the main source of protein.

MOVING

towards better kidney health

by Michelle Hampson



An abundance of lifestyle tips on the Internet can be overwhelming and often leave people confused about the best ways to manage their health. News headlines may tout a particular lifestyle practice one week, while denouncing it the next. But one thing has stayed consistent and clear throughout decades of research: exercise has many health benefits and is recommended for everyone, which is highlighted on The Kidney Foundation’s Kidney Wellness Hub. Study after study shows that exercise lowers blood pressure, helps control blood sugar, improves mood, controls weight, boosts energy, reduces pain, promotes sleep, and increases life expectancy. Many of its benefits are particularly helpful for improving the symptoms of chronic diseases, including kidney disease.

“As a person moves on towards dialysis, we know that symptoms such as restless legs and cramps get a lot worse. Exercise certainly helps mitigate these symptoms, making them a lot better.”

Dr. Megan Borkum

kidney-specific benefits of exercise

1

Lowering Blood Pressure

Maintaining healthy blood pressure can help reduce the progression of kidney disease. Exercise is great for lowering blood pressure, and has even been found to improve kidney function in hypertensive people living with kidney disease.

2

Improving Mood

Exercise has been found to help decrease feelings of stress, anxiety and depression, and generally improve mood. Remarkably, these effects can be

immediate after just one exercise session.

3

Maintaining Muscle Strength

People living with advanced kidney disease are particularly prone to muscle wasting, which exercise can help combat. In particular, exercises to strengthen and maintain muscles, such as resistance training, have been shown to counteract muscle wasting.

4

Supporting Good Cardiovascular Health

Living with kidney disease

comes with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease as well. Exercise that increases the heart rate (aerobic exercise) can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease in numerous ways, for example by lowering cholesterol levels and improving blood pressure.

5

Relieving Symptoms of Restless Legs

The sensations of restless leg syndrome can worsen when people rest and stay inactive for too long. Light to moderate exercise – like walking, massaging, stretching, swimming, and peddling on an exercise bike – can help relieve the symptoms.

KICKSTARTING your exercise routine

Many people recognize the benefits of exercise and are eager to start – but just don't know how.

Dr. Megan Borkum is a nephrologist based in Vancouver, BC. Her advice is to find a physical activity that is easy to undertake.

"It's just really important that it's something that you can integrate into your lifestyle, that you enjoy, and keeps you interested and motivated – that's really the key," she says.

Creating and following an exercise routine can also help people achieve their fitness goals. It may seem daunting at first, but a routine doesn't need to be vigorous and intense right off the bat.

For example, Dr. Borkum suggests beginning with five-minute exercises several times a week, and gradually increasing the length of these sessions over time. A good goal to aim for is a total of about 150 minutes of exercise a week.

Incorporating some fun, social aspects into your fitness endeavour could also make it more enjoyable. "I think especially after the pandemic people have become pretty isolated,

so having a community of friends that you can exercise with is great for motivation, getting out of the house, and just generally good for mental health," says Dr. Borkum.

She points out that a friendly sparring match between friends – for example a competition to see who can get more steps in each week using apps – could be a great way to exercise. These competitions could be done in-person or remotely, but still bring people together and motivate each other.

"Just feeling that you're not alone in your journey, I think it really does help," Dr. Borkum says.

Did You Know?

The Kidney Wellness Hub has more than 70 on-demand exercise videos, including a suite of low-mobility fitness classes.



EXERCISE SUGGESTIONS

- Walking
- Biking
- Swimming
- Yoga
- Elastic band resistance training



FUN FACT

A recent study has shown that exercising the day before transplant surgery is associated with faster recovery periods and shorter hospital stays.

The MYTHS & FACTS

MYTH

People on peritoneal dialysis shouldn't swim in the ocean.

FACT

It's safe to swim in clean bodies of water, like oceans and lakes, just be sure to clean the exit site port after swimming.

MYTH

People with fistulas should avoid lifting heavy weights.

FACT

As long as weight or pressure isn't applied directly to the fistula, it's possible to use the arm as you normally would, including for moderate weightlifting.

exercise snacks

When it comes to getting into the groove of a new exercise routine, a little bit of support can go a long way.

Exercise snacks – a new Walking to Wellness plan from the Kidney Wellness Hub – aims to help people with kidney disease along their fitness journey, one step at a time.

For Janice Hannay, a kidney patient based in Victoria, BC, the program has helped her gradually increase the amount of exercise she does each week and feel good about achieving her fitness goals.

“I don't feel bad about what I can't do – I feel good about what I can do.”

The exercise snacks were designed by Joey Ficocelli, in his senior year as a kinesiologist student. Having previously worked closely with those living with kidney disease on a research project, he became familiar with the unique challenges they face when exercising. He wanted to create a simple plan to help anyone struggling to meet the Canadian guidelines.

He specifically designed the plan to be easy for anyone to follow. It uses the concept of exercise snacks, which are brief exercise sessions that should be done after meals, making it easier to create a healthy

lifestyle habit. There are twelve bi-weekly progressions, so it can be customized to meet people wherever they are starting with their activity level. Participants using the exercise snack plan will meet the Canadian Guidelines with just ten minutes of walking after each main meal five days a week.

“Everyone can benefit from breaking up prolonged periods of sitting throughout the day,” explains Joey. “We know that breaking up the prolonged periods of sitting is actually more effective than just exercising for, say, one hour a day.”

Hannay notes that fatigue is the symptom that hinders her the most from exercising, yet exercise snacks are still possible despite this challenge. Importantly, the plan involves bi-weekly check-ins with Joey and other kinesiology students, who talk about the benefits of exercise, go over the exercises, address any challenges participants may be experiencing, and provide extra encouragement.

Hannay says that while other exercise programs were too challenging and beyond her level, the opposite is true with the Walking to Wellness exercise snacks plan. “It's just so flexible and fits into my day,” she says, noting, “It's so important for my motivation, because it's achievable.”

SAMPLE EXERCISE SNACK

- 2 x 10 toe-ups
- 2 x 10 heel-ups
- 2 x 10 seated leg extension
- 10 hip flexions
- Walking 3 minutes

practical stress management strategies for healthy kidneys

by Michelle Hampson

Everyone who has experienced stress knows that it can be mentally draining, but what's less talked about are the physical impacts that stress can have on the body.

For example, stress can weaken the immune system and slow healing. Therefore, finding ways to reduce stress can be very beneficial for a person's overall health, and especially for those living with kidney disease who have the added stress of living with a chronic condition.

Dr. Gavril Hercz is a nephrologist and psychotherapist at Humber River Hospital who specializes on the impact of chronic kidney disease on mental health. He notes that, although it is difficult for researchers to study the exact connections between the body and the mind, evidence shows that stress can lead to increased blood pressure, blood sugar levels and inflammation in the body, which are all factors known to exacerbate kidney disease.

"Theoretically, stress can aggravate kidney function because of these changes in the body that stress can bring about," explains Dr. Hercz. "The more we can manage [stress], the less impactful it will be in the long-term."

A key way to manage stress, he emphasizes, is to "put that stress into words." This can be done by writing feelings and thoughts down in a journal, consulting a therapist, or talking with family and friends. It may be especially helpful to talk with peers living with kidney disease who are going through similar experiences.

"If you're meeting with someone else with kidney disease, you can say here's someone who is doing well and they are going through the same thing that I am – that can be very

supportive," Dr. Hercz explains, noting that the Kidney Foundation offers various programs related to peer support.

Dr. Hercz also sees a lot of value in some simple activities that people can engage in that are known to reduce stress, such as mindful meditation, deep breathing and exercise like a walk outdoors.

By incorporating mindfulness practices, regular physical activity, and nurturing social connections, individuals can reduce the impact of stress and enjoy not just better mental health, but physical health as well.

"I'm a big proponent of mindful meditation and breathing exercises in terms of grounding yourself. Certainly some form of physical activity is also grounding – just going on walks is actually very helpful."

Dr. Gavril Hercz





10 tips to managing stress for kidney health

Stress, often considered a product of the mind, can have profound effects on the body, including the kidneys. Understanding the mind-body connection and utilizing stress management techniques is helpful for maintaining kidney health.

01

Mindfulness Meditation

Engage in mindfulness meditation to promote relaxation and reduce stress. Focusing on your breath and being present in the moment can help calm the mind and alleviate the physiological effects of stress on the body.

02

Healthy Nutrition

Adopt a balanced and nutritious diet. Certain foods, such as those rich in antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids, can have anti-inflammatory effects, supporting overall health, including kidney function.

03

Adequate Sleep

Prioritize quality sleep to allow the body and mind to rejuvenate. Lack of sleep can exacerbate stress and negatively impact overall health, including kidney health.

04

Social Connections

Maintain strong social connections with friends and family. Positive social interactions provide emotional support and can be instrumental in managing stress.

05

Regular Physical Activity

Incorporate regular physical activity into your routine. Exercise is not only beneficial for overall health but also releases endorphins, the body's natural stress relievers.

ney health

found effects on the body,
ection and adopting effective
healthy kidneys.

The Kidney Wellness Hub provides access to a number of these stress management techniques. Visit kidneywellnesshub.ca.

06

Deep Breathing Exercises

Practice deep breathing exercises to activate the body's relaxation response. Deep, slow breaths can lower cortisol levels, reduce blood pressure, and promote a sense of calm.

07

Yoga and Tai Chi

Both yoga and tai chi combine physical movement with mindfulness, offering a holistic approach to stress management. These practices promote flexibility, balance, and a sense of inner calm.

08

Limiting Stimulants

Reduce the consumption of stimulants such as caffeine and nicotine, as they can contribute to increased stress levels. Opt for herbal teas or decaffeinated alternatives.

09

Time Management

Organize your schedule effectively to reduce feelings of being overwhelmed. Prioritize tasks, delegate when possible, and allocate time for relaxation and self-care.

10

Professional Support

Seek professional support if you're struggling with chronic stress. A mental health professional can provide coping strategies and support tailored to your individual needs.

from diagnosis to life after transplant

by Jane Thomas, BC Renal

Chief Michael Recalma of the Qualicum First Nation knows firsthand what it's like to have his kidneys fail, to urgently need dialysis treatment, and to receive a kidney transplant. In 2018, after feeling like he'd had a mild flu for about two weeks, he went to see a community nurse at his local health centre. There, he learned he had extremely high blood pressure—a main risk factor for kidney disease—and that he needed to be treated right away.

Reflecting on advice he would share these days about kidney disease warning signs, he says he had an overall unwell feeling. He also says, "Pay attention to fatigue and changes in urinary function including output, colour and odour."

As a leader in his community and following his experience with kidney disease, Chief Recalma has had invitations to speak with his fellow Qualicum band members and the general public. He's taken some of those



opportunities to share the importance of kidney health and overall wellbeing.

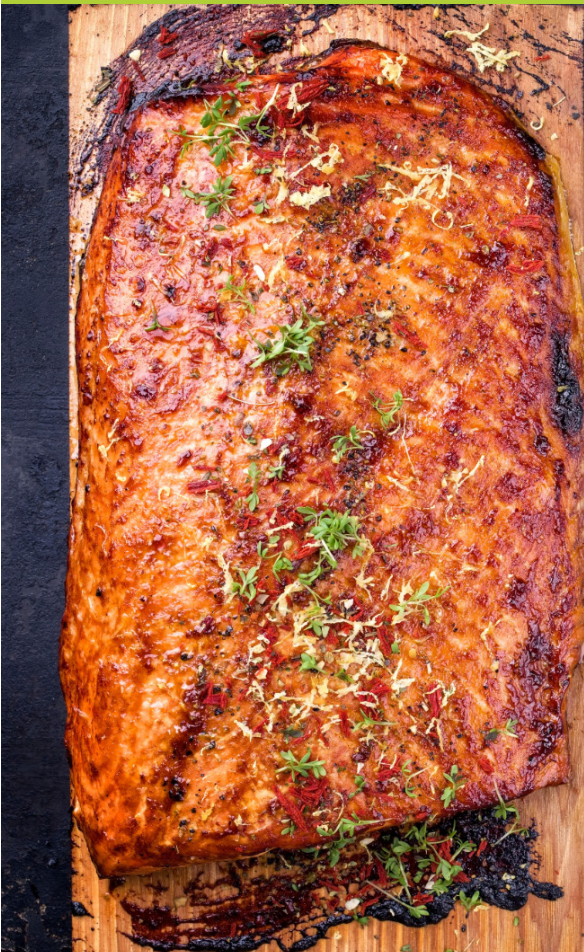
“I would encourage everyone to have conversations with family and community about their kidney health.”

He adds that some of these conversations have led him to connect with others who have been on dialysis, received a kidney transplant, or donated a kidney as a living kidney donor.

In 2022, Chief Recalma received the gift of a kidney transplant from a living donor, relieving him of dialysis treatments that had been very tiring for him. The new kidney provided him with renewed health and energy, and he says he’s also made some changes to increase his overall

wellness: “I have continued with the renal diet with a few modifications. Exercise, mental and spiritual well-being have played a very large role in boosting my overall wellness. I am blessed to live very close to a river and when I need to recharge myself I will take a walk along the river to enjoy what nature has to offer.”

He and his wife, Sharon, find that the summertime provides a great opportunity to use kidney-friendly vegetables grown in the garden in their family recipes. They share their favourite salmon recipe below, which is usually cooked over an open fire on cedar sticks, using salmon butterflied. Served with foraged steamed stinging nettles, wild rice, and soap berry ice cream, it makes an amazing local-inspired dinner.



BBQ Cedar Plank Salmon

- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 lb salmon fillet
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cedar plank

Pre-soak cedar plank for 2-24 hours.

Combine first 3 ingredients and pour in shallow dish.

Season salmon with salt and pepper and place in dish, covering with marinade, and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Preheat BBQ and turn off one side of grill. Place planks on unlit side and heat, rotating once.

Place salmon on plank and cook for 20-25 minutes, watching that the plank doesn’t catch fire.

Remove and cover with foil. Let stand 5 minutes; salmon will continue to cook while resting.



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